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## Researching Memory in Early Modern Studies

Chedgzoy, K., Graham, E., Hodgkin, K., & Wray, R. (2018). Researching Memory in Early Modern Studies. *Memory Studies*, 11(1), 5-20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698017736834>

**Published in:**  
Memory Studies

**Document Version:**  
Peer reviewed version

**Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:**  
[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

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## Requested Details

**Names:** Kate Chedgzoy, Elspeth Graham, Katharine Hodgkin, Ramona Wray

**Address** for correspondence:

c/o Kate Chedgzoy

School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics

Newcastle University

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 7RU

(email) : [kate.chedgzoy@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:kate.chedgzoy@ncl.ac.uk)

**Affiliation:** Kate Chedgzoy, School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics,  
Newcastle University

Elspeth Graham, School of Humanities and Social Science, Liverpool John Moores  
University

Katharine Hodgkin, Raphael Samuel History Centre, University of East London.

Ramona Wray, School of English, Queen's University Belfast.

**Article Title:** Researching Memory in Early Modern Studies

**Preferred Running Head:** Memory in Early Modern Studies

## Abstract

This essay pursues the study of early modern memory across a chronologically, conceptually and thematically broad canvas in order to address key questions about the historicity of memory and the methodologies of memory studies. First, what is the value for our understanding of early modern memory practices of transporting the methodologies of contemporary memory studies backwards, using them to study the memorial culture of a time before living memory? Second, what happens to the cross-disciplinary project of memory studies when it is taken to a distant period, one that had its own highly self-conscious and much debated cultures of remembering? Drawing on evidence and debates from a range of disciplinary locations, but primarily focusing on literary and historical studies, the essay interrogates crucial differences and commonalities between memory studies and early modern studies.

**Keywords:** Early modern memory; memory studies; methodology; memory cultures

**Article word count** 9181

## Author biographies

**Kate Chedgzoy** is Professor of Renaissance Literature and Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Humanities and Social Sciences at Newcastle University. She is the author of *Women's Writing in the British Atlantic World: Memory, Place and History, 1550-1700* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), and a contributing editor of Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead (eds) *Theories of Memory: A Reader* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007). She has published on Shakespeare and early modern women's writing, and is currently researching children and childhood in early modern culture.

**Elsbeth Graham** is Professor of Early Modern Literature at Liverpool John Moores University. She has published on a range of issues relating to memory, ranging from early modern women's writing and political and religious autobiography to, most recently, memory and reputation in William Cavendish's cultural productions. She also contributes to the field of medical humanities where she has written on trauma, ethics and medical communications and worked on dementia. Since 2004 she has been involved in a major urban regeneration project, Shakespeare North, which is building a reproduction Cockpit in Court theatre in Prescott, Merseyside to commemorate the town's Elizabethan theatrical heritage.

**Katharine Hodgkin** is Professor of Cultural History at the University of East London, and UEL Director of the Raphael Samuel History Centre. She has co-edited (with Susannah Radstone) two collections of essays on memory studies, *Contested Pasts: the politics of memory* (Routledge, 2003) and *Regimes of Memory* (Routledge, 2003). She has published a number of articles on early modern culture, with a particular focus on life writing and memory, and has also worked on the history of melancholy and mental disorder (*Madness in Seventeenth-Century Autobiography*, Routledge, 2007; *Women, Madness and Sin: the autobiographical writings of Dionys Fitzherbert*, Ashgate, 2010). She is currently working on a monograph, *The Self in Time: memory, subjectivity and life writing in early modern Britain*.

**Ramona Wray** is Reader in English at Queen's University Belfast. She is the author of *Women Writers of the Seventeenth Century* (2004), the co-author of *Great Shakespeareans: Welles, Kozintsev, Kurosawa, Zeffirelli* (2013), the editor of Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* (2012) in the Arden Early Modern Drama series and the co-editor of numerous other works, including *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts* (2011) and *Reconceiving the Renaissance: A Critical Reader* (2004). Her essays on early modern women's writing and Shakespeare on film have appeared in such journals as *Critical Survey*, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *Women's Writing*.

## **Researching Memory in Early Modern Studies**

**Kate Chedgzoy, Elspeth Graham, Katharine Hodgkin, Ramona Wray**

### **Introduction**

‘Memory’, long a significant object of study for scholars of the early modern, has more recently become an important conceptual and interpretative tool used to explore a diverse range of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts, artefacts, remains and imaginations. In literary studies, critics have used memory to illuminate authorial recollections, representations of memorial acts, and the relation of memory to performance practices (Hiscock, 2011; Holland, 2006). For historians, memory has offered a means of thinking about the complex processes of change and resistance that shaped early modern Britain and Ireland (Walsham, 2011; Wood, 2013). Frequently deployed to illuminate the social and affective dimensions of religious and political transformations and conflicts from the era, theorizations of memory have also been productively taken up to track the responsive formation of cultures of remembering and forgetting (Baldo, 2012; Ivic and Williams, 2004). Conversely, many of the core concerns of the cross-disciplinary field of memory studies find an echo in key themes explored in recent work on early modern cultures of memory. These include the commemoration of suffering; material objects and memory practices; memory and subjectivity; the politics of memory; and the ways in which memory both makes and unmakes community identity.

Scholars working on early modern memory are alert to these intellectual continuities, but adopt very different positions as to the similarities and differences between early modern and contemporary practices and concepts of memory. William E. Engel, Rory Loughnane and Grant Williams, for instance, insist on the unfamiliarity of early modern memory culture in that it frames memory as orderly rather than disruptive, tied to the rational soul rather than the irrational unconscious (2016: 1-38). Judith Pollmann and Erika Kuijpers, in contrast, highlight long-term continuities. Against those who see modern and postmodern memory as being decisively reshaped by technological and geopolitical transformations, they contend that early modern memory cultures too are highly mediated and global, and that ‘the difference which mass media have made to memory is really one of scale, rather than of the

mechanisms by which memories are shaped and mediated’ (Pollmann and Kuijpers, 2013: 22). Both of these approaches are illuminating in different ways, because – as we argue below in our exploration of the historicity and contingency of trauma and nostalgia as psychic and social formations – early modern memory is both like and unlike its late modern counterpart. This tension underpins much research into early modern memory cultures, and one of our goals is to explore its implications.

This essay analyses both the culture of memory in the early modern period, and the scholarship that has considered it, in order to ask two key questions about the historicity of memory and the methodologies of memory studies. First, what is the value for our understanding of early modern memory practices of transporting the methodologies of contemporary memory studies backwards, using them to study the memorial culture of a time before living memory? Second, what happens to the cross-disciplinary project of memory studies when it is taken to a distant period, one that had its own highly self-conscious and much debated cultures of remembering? The authors began to address these questions collectively within the framework of an AHRC-funded network, ‘Memory and Community in Early Modern Britain’, and continue to examine them within that spatial context in the present essay, albeit with an increasing awareness of the transnational resonances of the questions and methods in play. Our own disciplinary perspectives are primarily historical and literary, reflecting our intellectual backgrounds and the perspectives of the other essays in this special issue. But memory studies is an inherently interdisciplinary area, and a diverse range of methods and objects of study is involved. Connecting disparate debates and practices, we stage here a conversation between conceptually attuned (but historically understated) work, and less theoretically nuanced (but more historically responsive) scholarship, in order to interrogate crucial differences and commonalities between memory studies and early modern studies.

Section One examines areas of current and projected overlap between memory studies and early modern critical analyses. Reflecting on both fields of enquiry, we identify moments at which comparable preoccupations emerge into visibility, emphasizing in particular questions of place and time. In Section Two, we investigate the question of temporality, concentrating on the transportability of key concepts more usually associated with communicative memory, among which we treat trauma and nostalgia as exemplary. Section Three shifts the focus from temporality and discontinuity to the affective, experiential and immanent aspects of memory,

attending in particular to the way they foreground questions about gender and embodiment. A final section takes up a question implicit throughout the essay's address to these intersecting thematics: how do we continue to make meaning out of re-imagined historical pasts in the here and now? How, in other words, do late modern memory practices shape the continuing meanings of the early modern? Pursuing the study of early modern memory across a chronologically, conceptually and thematically broad canvas, the essay foregrounds questions about the interaction of continuity and change which are central to making sense of memory both as an individual cognitive and emotional faculty, and as a collective cultural phenomenon. By highlighting reciprocity and a commonality of intellectual engagement, we aim to establish new alliances between previously distinct fields and to ignite a mutually enriching dialogue about memory across discontinuities between disciplines and approaches.

## **I Modernity and early modern memory: Time and rupture**

If time is memory's primary modality, then memory offers a way of reconceptualizing the relation between past and present, an alternative to the supposed linearity and pastness of history that takes the form of the persistence of an unresolved past into the present. In Pierre Nora's influential formulation,

Memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting ... History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is always a phenomenon of the present, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. (1996: 3)

This positioning of memory and history as opposites has been extensively contested (Samuel, 1994). It also raises questions about how to make sense of this relationship in the context of early modern culture, when the discipline of history had not yet taken on its modern shape, and where the cultural meanings of memory look to us both familiar and strange. Nora figures the early modern period as the time before the separation of memory and history, a moment when the past's lived and embodied experience of 'reserves of memory' (1996: 2) had not yet given way to the effects of historiographical modernity (1996: 2, 3). This account is often associated with a tripartite deep chronological structure for the history of memory – premodern, modern, postmodern – which draws on a long tradition in historical, sociological and cultural theory of contrasting premodern and modern life in relation to a range of

concepts (community, rationalism, the nation, among others) (Schwarz, 2010: 47-8; Pollmann and Kuijpers, 2013: 1-5). Early modernists counterpose to this over-simplifying narrative an insistence that the memory cultures of the early modern world were complex, self-conscious and highly mediated, rather than organic and unreflective.

A relatively recent arrival in periodization, the very concept of the early modern to describe the period between about 1500 and 1750 identifies it both as part of the *longue durée* of the modern, and as a period with distinctively pre-modern qualities. The question of when early modern becomes modern is not straightforward. It is frequently pinned to the idea of a transformative rupture: the world of modernity is inaugurated by the upheavals of the period at the end of the eighteenth century when political, agricultural and industrial revolutions transformed cultures and societies in Europe and the Atlantic world (Baggerman, Dekker and Mascuch, 2011; Trouillot, 1995). But early modern Europe went through its own great ruptures, from the Reformation to the Civil Wars in seventeenth-century Britain and Ireland: war and political upheaval constantly rewrote and reimagined both history and the future. As in our own age, new technology (in this instance print culture) transformed the memorial relation between past and present. Tracking memory's travels in the Anglophone Atlantic world and the British colonies of New England and the Chesapeake highlights originary narratives of trauma and genocide in a way that challenges memorial cultures and demands that we read early modern history in terms of ethics and violent rupture. Scholarship such as Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother* (2008), and cultural productions such as Selina Thompson's performance, *Salt* (2017), ask questions about the interrelations of memory and history by undertaking journeys that recreate enslaved people's passages through the routes of the triangular trade. In so doing, they explicitly invite us to consider whether this aspect of early modern history can helpfully be understood through comparison to the twentieth century's experience of mass deaths in genocidal wars, often seen as an inception point for memory studies as a methodology or a discipline.

Rupture not only describes the break between old and new memory cultures; it also heightens awareness of the otherness of the past and the ever-present danger of its complete disappearance. If the present and the future lose touch with the past, the question of what will be forgotten and what remembered becomes pressing. This awareness of temporality's vulnerability to disruption informs anxieties about memory's inverse, forgetting, or being forgotten, lost in death. Continuity into a future beyond death is always a matter for the individual but may also be dynastic, national or collective. "Sweetheart, you'll forget this"

... “No, I shall never forget it while I live,” runs the reported exchange between Charles I, on the eve of his execution, and his thirteen-year-old-daughter, Princess Elizabeth.

“Remember”, Charles says the next day on the scaffold to Bishop Juxon, giving him the St George medallion intended as a memorial gift for his eldest son, then in exile (Iagomarsino and Wood, 1989: 132-4, 143-4). These utterances are predicated on the need to establish a future past (Kenny, 2015). Faced with erasure from life, agency and visibility, Charles enjoins witnessing others to take the reality and truth of his past and present into the future in a moment of urgently articulated exchange between self, absence and remembering others. The demand to be posthumously remembered is informed, too, by an acute sense of being wronged that has implications beyond matters of personal existence and non-existence. At the other end of the social spectrum from King Charles, prophet Anna Trapnel’s seventeenth-century *Report and Plea* is both a memory of her ‘journey from London’ and a protest against her ‘harsh, rough, boisterous, rugged, inhumane and uncivil usage ... by the Justices and people in Cornwall’ (Trapnel, 2016: title page). The personal and political are fused here by inserting the self into a broader history of injustice and resistance. Yet such formulations also separate the self and the specific injustice experienced from the communalities of history by insisting on their particularity. In these utterances, social and individual relations to time are invoked, and memory as a mode of affective continuity with the past is privileged over the greater separation and neutrality of history.

Modern memory studies insists that the injunction to remember also entails a demand for justice and reparation, embedded in the tendency of much of the language of memory to be sacramental, framing memory as a spiritual good carrying a weight of obligation (Klein, 2000). This would have seemed familiar to those early modern subjects for whom memory was closely tied to spiritual and social duty. ‘It is a sign that we sincerely esteem, and heartily remember a Friend,’ advised Thomas Powell, ‘when we do not forget his Kindness, but do even write them down in our *Memorandum Book* ... Such who have received Mercies from the hands of God ... and yet are unthankfull, forgetting both God and his Benefits ... are most ungratefull’ (1676: 20). This contested but powerful way of thinking about memory cued disobedience, rebellion and neglect of responsibilities to others to the idea of forgetfulness. It embedded the ethical aspects of memory in a hierarchical social structure in which ideas of obligation were central, so that the duty of remembering, aligned with social place, ran not only from past to present, but also upwards and downwards. The widespread modern identification of memory with a challenge to power, tasked with rectifying injustice



and giving voice to those hidden from history, sits uneasily with this early modern emphasis on its capacity to restore a social order predicated on appropriate forms of deference.

If memory was identified by early modern people as a means of mending and reparation, it was also recognised as having the potential to disrupt, and was often invoked in the cause of political opposition or radicalism. Failing, silencing or disrupting temporal sequence, memory could represent a disturbance in the relation between past and present as well as a capacity to reconcile. King Charles' entreaties at the time of his execution would serve as the stimulus for a proliferation of further memorial statements, forms and events, inciting a material culture of royalist remembrance, an artistic ethos of the sublime underpinned by loss, and a sense of a fractured body politic (De Groot, 2004: 141-75; Graham, 2011: 56-63). Alongside the injunctions to retain the past in memorial practices, however, sits the opposite desire, to allow it to subside into forgetfulness. The Commonwealth government's 1652 Act of General Pardon and Oblivion issued pardons for a range of offences in the hope that, 'all Rancour and Evil Will occasioned by the late Differences may be buried in perpetual Oblivion'. The complications of such attempts to control the past were exemplified in a similar act a mere eight years later, after the restoration of the monarchy, which likewise aimed to 'bury all Seeds of future Discords and remembrance of the former [crimes]' with an Act of Indemnity and Oblivion in the opposite political interest (*Acts and Ordinances*, 565-6). It is unsurprising that the cataclysmic rupture of the execution of a king generates a series of memorial traces that move in contradictory directions. That such disturbances might make the work of memory all the more critical was something of which early moderns were well aware. Any sense that the early modern period was characterized by a simple self-presence of memorial cultures might be productively complicated and nuanced so as to enable a richer approach to past memory cultures and a questioning of assumptions made in those areas of memory studies that have a foreshortened understanding of the past.

## **II Speaking to the past: Trauma, nostalgia and the historicity of memory**

Having explored the commonalities and tensions in current and early modern conceptualisations of memory, in this section we ask what is at stake when critical concepts and methodologies that emerged into prominence within modernity and are often assumed to be specific to it are brought to bear on earlier historical periods. We test possible answers to this question by focusing on nostalgia and trauma, two key concepts in memory studies that

have been closely linked to modernity. The history of trauma generally sketches its early use as a term for a physical wound before moving to the era of Freud and Benjamin and the shock of the new (Luckhurst, 2008). Nostalgia is framed in relation to the rupture of modernity discussed in the previous section, foregrounding awareness of historical change and the loss of connection to the past (Boym, 2015). The terms themselves, however, are both early modern in origin, emerging in the late seventeenth century, and elements of these memory formations can, as we argue below, be traced in historical documents and cultural texts even where they are not labelled as such (Johanson, 2016; Graham, 2016: 96-98; Graham, 2017: 155). However, in so far as memory cultures are historical, those associated with structures of feeling are not necessarily identical with their modern cognates, and the appropriateness of understanding either concept generally as a ‘theory applicable across time and space to very different formations of memory activity’ has been questioned (Radstone and Schwarz, 2010: 8). To re-examine these memorial relations to the past in an early modern context may thus have value in helping to illuminate the concepts more generally.

The notion that memory may be traumatic – that it wounds, that it can be a source of sorrow – is widely apparent in early modern texts. Richard Norwood’s autobiographical narrative vividly articulates the ability of a painful memory to endure as a source of hurt: recollecting a distressing experience at school, he recounts being obliged to ‘drink deep of a most bitter cup, the remembrance whereof is even an abhorring unto me to this day’ (Norwood, 1945: 12). That he tells the story of this loss repeatedly also suggests the insistence associated today with the concept of traumatic memory, characterized by recurrence that disrupts the present moment and the impossibility of forgetting. Norwood’s painful repetitions are not represented by him as disordered, however, they are reminders of God’s purposes for him, and the true cause of his enduring grief, he explains, is not the distressing event, but his own reaction, which was to fall into ‘sinful and dissolute courses’ (1945: 12). The explanatory frame within which Norwood makes sense of distressful remembering is one that encompasses divine purpose and moral judgment.

The cause of Norwood’s miseries is relatively minor compared to the kinds of life event generally associated with traumatic memory today. We can perhaps find something closer in Mary Rowlandson’s seventeenth-century narrative of the destruction of her home, deaths of her sister and daughter, and march through a winter Massachusetts landscape as a captive of Wampanoag Indians. Recalling and reflecting on experiences of displacement, bereavement, physical wounding and sexual threat as they affected her and other members of her

community, Rowlandson acts on the ethical responsibility to remember, record and witness which, as we have suggested, is common both to recent work on traumatic memory and to early modern understandings of memory (Felman and Laub, 1992: 17). Writing as the subject of traumatic memories, Rowlandson vividly registers subsequent psychological disruptions and social dislocations, as manifested for instance in recurrent insomnia:

I can remember the time, when I used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts, whole nights together, but now it is other ways with me. When all are fast about me, and no eye open ... my thoughts are upon things past. (Rowlandson, 1997: 111, 104)

If Rowlandson's sense of her relation to past self and present community is ruptured by the insistent recurrence of distressing memories, the process of recalling and recording those memories in the act of writing is also one which has a future-oriented and reparative purpose. Her autobiographical account was written in part for her immediate audience of Puritan readers/colony-builders in New England who were eager for assistance in making sense of the violent disruptions to life occasioned by Native American resistance. Her text is a personal account of suffering which contributes to the public memorial record of colonial life, albeit understood within a strongly providential framework as 'a memorandum of God's dealings with her' (Rowlandson, 1997: 65). Like Richard Norwood, then, Rowlandson and her readers respond to a spiritual culture which encouraged them to recollect and reflect on past experience in such a way as to discern God's design; within this framework, remembering and articulating trauma were actively incited.

Rowlandson's sense of being haunted highlights the disruptive effect trauma has on temporality, elucidating a state in which the time of memory is stuck, interrupted or returns unmanageably. Similarly, as part of her recovery from spiritual and mental collapse, Dionys Fitzherbert describes how she would 'meditate' on what she had gone through, 'the which', she adds, 'I could not do without many tears and trembling of my body' (Hodgkin, 2010: 221). This recuperative remembering highlights the repetitive character of distressing memories, the inability to control the process of return, and consequent depression: 'too much thinking of it dulled me and made me unapt to a true relenting sorrow and prayer' (2010: 221). If Fitzherbert's psychological trauma was exceptionally acute, she is typical here of many early modern subjects in so far as she does not understand remembering suffering to be intrinsically therapeutic, but rather values and yearns for that silencing of memory which

can now be interpreted as a symptom of trauma. Politically, as we have seen, acts of oblivion were imposed in order to remove the memory of grievances and contain the aftermath of violent conflict. In individuals, excessive dwelling on troubled memories was thought to lead to dissent and discontent. Henry Peacham recommended ‘that evil matters be not remembered’ so as to avoid ‘renew[ing] unprofitable sorrow or mov[ing] anger’ (Engel, Loughnane and Williams, 2016: 122). Evidently, the existence of a framework that endowed the recollection of traumatic memories with spiritual purpose did not mean that either the content of the memories or the processes of working through them were affectively neutral.

Like trauma, nostalgia highlights the non-linear and emotionally fraught nature of the time of memory, and it too requires some rethinking in relation to early modern memory cultures. One account identifies nostalgia’s narrative of temporal difference and loss as the product of the upheavals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and claims that a nostalgic relation to the past is absent from life narratives written before this period (Baggerman Dekker and Mascuch, 2011). But there is evidence to counter this claim. The term was coined as early as 1688 in Johannes Hofer’s description of the sickness that overcomes predominantly Swiss soldiers separated from their native mountains, and the emotions that it draws together in its later iterations – displacement, banishment, loss, regret, yearning – are clearly already at work in Hofer’s diagnosis and across a range of cultural and textual instances (Starobinski 1966: 87). At an individual level, the interplay of continuity and change is crucial to the formation of subjectivity in that memory shapes our sense of having or being a self that persists over time but is not self-identical at every moment of its existence. Many early modern sources recognize this and depict a nostalgic subjective relation to time. In *The Winter’s Tale*, Shakespeare illustrates this when he has his protagonist Leontes, King of Sicily, not merely recall his childhood self, but reflect on the interplay of recognition and alterity embedded in that recollection: ‘methoughts I did recoil / Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreeched, / In my green velvet coat; my dagger muzzled’ (1.2.156-58). Recognizing the child as precursor of the adult he has become, Leontes articulates a sense of loss grounded in the remembered child’s irrecoverable difference from the remembering adult. A similar sense of the otherness of the past measured through the loss of childhood can also be traced in early modern autobiographies (Hodgkin 2016).

Nostalgia often implies a loss of place as well as time (of course, these often go together). The sense of place, and its importance to memory, has been central to important work in early modern memory studies (Schwyzer, 2007; Chedgzoy, 2007a; Walsham, 2011; Wood, 2013).

Early modern authorities insisted on the need for individuals to be placed, both hierarchically and spatially, and, for the embedded populations of a local area, memory shaped their relationship to their surroundings: common rights, parish boundaries, holy wells, local myths and traditions were sustained for the future by the memories of the old men and women of the village (Walsham, 2011). However, even in this context, the memory of place is flexible and contestatory, often a tool in political struggles over land use and ownership (Wood, 2013). And the ideological focus on emplacement (to use Michel Foucault's term) was also constantly challenged by the increasing social and geographical mobility of the population, which took people away from their place of origin and converted it to a place of memory (Foucault, [1967] 1984). The centrality of place to early modern identity underpins the emergence of the disorder of nostalgia, but it also registers the increasing tenuousness of that link. The separation from place takes many forms: migration, exile and diaspora are all part of the early modern world, even if the vocabularies that defined them in these terms did not yet exist. Lady Anne Halkett, for example, mourning the death of her husband, reflected on the interaction between that grief and a sense of dislocation as an English widow in Scotland, characterizing herself as 'a stranger, born and bred in another country' (Halkett, 2007: 30). The emotional valence of loss of place is in evidence in this case and others before the concept of nostalgia emerges (Hodgkin, 2016). In some ways, then, movements of memory that might aptly be designated traumatic or nostalgic are visible in early modern culture and are identified in a memorial language which recognizes their pains, pleasures and persistence. At the same time, the early modern commitment to memory as a discourse of order and recuperation, and as an occasion to reflect on divine providence, complicates the question of how far affective qualities (such as grief, melancholia and the dwelling on a lost past) can be identified with trauma and nostalgia in their modern applications. Scholarship needs to attend to the ways in which temporality assumes social and material forms and to acknowledge that historicity and contingency are always in play when working with these concepts.

### **III Embodiment, affect and memory as material practice**

Our central concern with the historicity of memory means that our focus so far has been primarily on the temporality of memory. In recent years, however, the focus of scholarly attention in memory studies has shifted away from the passage of time and onto memory's immanent qualities, with the emergence of notions such as embodiment, emotion and affect

as key terms – a shift which also registers the increasing attention to the physiology of memory as it is being reconceptualized by neuroscience (Callard and Papoulias, 2010). Trauma theory, indeed, can be seen as a marker of this move from temporality to immanence, a hinge between memory as a troubled relation between past and present, and memory as always embedded and embodied. This renewed attention to memory as embodied, material and social is remarkably congruent with the embodied psychology of the early modern period, in which the three faculties of ‘common sense [i.e. reason], phantasy [and] memory’, as Robert Burton names them, were spatially mapped onto the head (Engel, Loughnane and Williams, 2016: 167). This localizes in terms of human anatomy the storage-organization-retrieval model of remembering that informs the arts and techniques of memory, typically articulated through spatial and material metaphors such as the storehouse or wax tablet. These serve as sites of memory to the extent that body and mind are brought to bear on them: to cite Robert Burton, ‘Memory lays up all the species which the senses have brought in, and records them as a good register, that they may be forthcoming when they are called for’ (Engel, Loughnane and Williams, 2016: 167, 168). The interdependence of mind and body that characterizes Galenic humoralism ‘offered therapies for maintaining and enhancing a healthy memory’ (Engel, Loughnane and Williams, 2016: 145) as well as shaping how the bodily effects of emotion were understood: remembered distress manifests itself in bodily disruption, and nostalgia is initially conceptualized as an illness that leads to physical weakness and ultimately death, curable only by a return to the lost landscape of youth and its material actuality (Starobinski, 1966: 90).

Matthew Lundin’s assertion that ‘it would be difficult to overestimate the materiality of premodern memorial culture’ (Lundin, 2015: 107) is vividly evidenced by the ways in which clothing and other domestic objects memorialize early modern traces of the body’s actions, both purposeful and involuntary (Stallybrass and Jones, 2000). On the early modern stage, Hamlet’s inky ‘suits of woe’ (1.2.86) betray his ‘prophetic soul’ (1.5.41); the arras punched with holes indicates the bleeding body of Polonius; and the flowers distributed by Ophelia reveal her insanity. Just as suggestive is the interplay of motion, sensory experience and cognition in the work of writing down, engraving or embroidering that which is to be remembered. A single monument or a solitary act of inscription can elicit, according to Peter Sherlock, a ‘whole gamut of memories touching on religion, art, learning, the dead, bodies, regulation, lineage and representation’ (2008: 231), and his work evidences the power of reading the artefacts most intimately associated with the body as a locus of memory. Either

acting through materials or working with material objects, the early modern subject participated in a complex nexus of mnemonic practices. That nexus is increasingly recognized as social as much as it is introverted in orientation, not least because interactions with other people, texts and events are necessary to generate the material on which memory works (Whitehead, 2009). Memories are formed and expressed by means of intersubjective social interactions, as reflections in early modern diaries and letters abundantly attest. For example, it was Elizabeth Tanfield's 1627 epistolary argument with her daughter, Elizabeth Cary, over the latter's conversion to Catholicism that prompted her angrily to remember her earlier 'desiers' for her daughter's happy marriage (1602), previous breakdowns in Cary's relationship with her father (1622-23) and a series of financial failings leading to disinheritance (Wolfe, 2001: 278). In this instance, a unique event – and a strong emotion – precipitates a memory chain of other recollections, the underlying social matrix being the precondition for memorialization. The example suggests some of the ways in which, in the words of Anne Whitehead, it may be 'productive to see the recent preoccupation with collective memory in dialogue with earlier traditions of thinking' (2009: 124).

Emotional, material and social dimensions of early modern memory were embedded in the development of a highly esteemed 'mnemonic literacy' (Engel, Loughnane and Williams, 2016: 17). The purposeful, culturally self-conscious use of the arts of memory, associated with a long cultural trajectory from the classical world to the Renaissance, was designed to produce and sustain control over the self and over the material being remembered (Draaisma, 2000) and to manipulate memory's capacity to contribute to 'the generation and inflection of affective bonds' (Klein, 2000: 130). If memory is, as many early moderns worried, 'partial, allusive, fragmentary, transient' and unstable (Klein, 2000: 138), practices of memory cultivation were a sustained attempt to manage and harness that volatility to culturally valued ends. They were applied not merely to the written and printed documents of alphabetic literacy, but also to objects and places, to religious discourses (Ryrie, 2013: 277-279) and to a wide range of embodied, sensory and emotive experiences.

The practices and institutions that enacted the development of mnemonic literacy in early modern individuals were also overwhelmingly gendered, and this places a particular spotlight on the distinctive ways in which memory cultures past and present have mobilized masculinity and femininity. Memory training was central to humanist pedagogy's content, methods and purposes, shaping the curriculum offered to boys of the middle and upper classes, but the education of girls likewise placed high value on mnemonic literacy, whether

this was for spiritual purposes (such as the ability to recall a sermon) or more domestic ones (memorising embroidery stitches or medicinal recipes). Moreover, in an age of political patriarchalism, lines of intended memorial transmission inevitably ran according to gendered norms that were simultaneously familial and political. Yet even though new gender-related methods, practices and canons have been established in the broad field of memory studies, gender often does not appear as an explicit concern or category of analysis in work on early modern memory, tending to come into play only where women's engagement with memory is the ostensible subject of research (Seelig, 2006). The important and valuable anthology, *The Memory Arts in Renaissance England*, for example, includes only three excerpts by women out of seventy, and makes no comment on the gendered over-determinations of men's engagements with memory work (Engel, Loughnane and Williams, 2016). Approaches to early modern memory often continue to locate 'women as cultural memory's marginalized "other"' (Weber, 2008: 206) in a dynamic which reflects and re-enacts a division between memory as technique and memory as affect.

In terms of approach and methods, the intersecting histories of gender studies and memory studies reveal a mutuality of concerns: both offer, in Marianne Hirsch's words, 'a means to account for the power structures animating forgetting, oblivion and erasure' (2012: 15-16). As scholars such as Susannah Radstone (2007) have argued, memory studies must attend to the interrelations of gender and memory, a demand widely acted on in theoretical scholarship (Haaken, 2010; Chedgzoy, 2007b) and increasingly brought to bear on the study of memory in culture. In early modern studies, this is contingent on a recognition that gender does not operate in isolation, but in interaction with other forms of socio-cultural organization (such as social rank, religion, politics) or forms of cultural production. Paying gendered attention to memory's operations in early modern culture not only enables us to complicate our accounts of early modern femininity and indeed masculinity, but also to think through the reciprocal formation of men's and women's social identities, and thus their relations to the practices of memory.

A case in point is Lucy Hutchinson's *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, a biography of her husband John Hutchinson, one of the Parliamentarians who signed the warrant authorizing the execution of King Charles. Writing after his death, Lucy Hutchinson seeks to validate the memory of her husband and of the political cause to which they were both committed through a detailed presentation of his public role. But this vindication is



predicated on a statement of generalized personal grief which worries at the difficult relations between mourning and memory:

They who dwell on mortall excellencies, when, by the inevitable fate of all things fraile, their adored Idolls are taken from them, may lett loose the winds of passion to bring in a flood of sorrow, whose ebbing tides carry away the deare memory of what they have lost; and when comfort is assay'd to such mourners, commonly all objects are remoov'd out of their view which may with their remembrance renew their grief.  
(1973: 1)

To read the *Memoirs* as a work of both memory and history alongside Clarendon's emphatically impersonal *History of the Great Rebellion* is not just to juxtapose politically opposed accounts of the Civil Wars, but also to bring the actuality of suffering into the history of the seventeenth century. Read through the lens of feminism or of memory studies, Lucy Hutchinson's evocation of her personal grief (her emphasis on the domestic as the place of grief and the source of memoir) puts emotion and a traditionally feminine space into alignment, in the process bringing them to bear on the public space of political history. Such a reading, transferred to the *History of the Great Rebellion*, might in turn bring to the surface the undeclared predication on loss of Clarendon's historical account, written in two periods of exile (1646-48 and 1668). Bringing together in this way Hutchinson's memoir and Clarendon's national narrative as variant forms of history-writing, freed from the hierarchization of public history over private memoir, would serve to complicate the separation of public and private spheres assumed in much writing about the Civil Wars and their aftermath, and to redress splits between active and passive, intellectual and affective. Such potentially liberating dissolutions of those oppositions serve to restore what has been obscured, and to challenge the prioritizing in both memory work and historiography of some pasts at the expense of others. By thus juxtaposing and comparing the ways in which men and women engage with memory practices, scholars could ensure that memory studies pays critical attention both to women as subjects and agents of memory work and to gender as a category of analysis.

Such engagements have opened up an increasing awareness of the ways in which masculinity, once hidden from scrutiny by its very normative status, might be fashioned through the cultural works of memory and memorializing. Mark Breitenberg's influential argument that early modern '[m]asculinity is inherently anxious' (1996: 2) is pertinent to the

interrelations of masculinity and memory in the context of war – an important focus in memory studies generally as a site of traumatic experience, and particularly important as an aspect of the historical ruptures that characterized the early modern period. Lucy Hutchinson's memorialization of her husband as the ideal republican man in the aftermath of the Civil Wars might be seen as one manifestation of this. Another is the attempt, expressed in legislation and in cultural representation, to control the memory of the Civil Wars, particularly as it was embodied in the spectacle of its residue of itinerant wounded soldiers. Reinscribing the male body as a site of memory allows it to be entered into a culture of postwar mourning and attempted recovery (Purkiss, 2005). The combined impact of memory studies and feminist work on the period has generated a reframing of such concerns, manifest in a shift in terminology from 'war', 'battle' or 'military' to 'violence, materiality, and temporality' (Harlan, 2016: 13). As well as providing a new approach to the construction of masculine identities, this opens up a less causal perspective on war as an inevitable aspect of nation formation (itself a highly gendered process and object of inquiry in the context of early modern studies).

#### **IV Memorializing the early modern today**

A key thematic strand in the 'Memory and Community in Early Modern Britain' network in which the present essay had its beginnings focused on the ways in which the early modern period is remembered and reframed in our own time and place. Memory studies is frequently concerned to form a bridge between academic understandings of the past and broader engagements with it, including museum and gallery initiatives, deployments of political and regional discourse, and popular and mass media memory forms, including television, film and re-enactment (Hodgkin and Radstone, 2007: 3). Some of the key concepts and thematics tracked in this essay continue to play important roles here: gender, embodiment, trauma and nostalgia, temporality, the lived consequences of historical rupture, and the similarities and differences between the early and post-modern worlds are all salient in these modes of cultural remembering.

In museums and galleries, individuated objects are an essential means of opening a window onto the early modern, as a memory prompt that brings the past back into the present. The prompt is made materially manifest in exhibitions based around the tactility and physicality of Renaissance culture. 'Dressed to Kill' (Tower of London, 2009) showcased Henry VIII's brutally masculinized and flamboyant collections of armour, while 'In Fine Style: The Art of

Tudor and Stuart Fashion' (Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, 2013) revealed how women mediated issues of identity via particular fabrics, costume choices, colours and jewellery items. A memory, however mediated, of a subject is conjured through the fetishization and display of possessions which offer an illusion of intimacy and authenticity. Centrally significant in these exhibitions, bodies as sites of memory again raise questions of gender which are also pivotal in media memorializations. The sustained focus on women as subjects and agents in successful TV series such as *The Tudors* (2007-2010) and *Jamestown* (2017) creates a space for screen versions of gendered embodiment, played out through scenarios of rape, torture and childbirth, to dominate popular cultural understandings of the early modern. In both cases, 'feminine' narratives of emotion, sexuality and appearance are foregrounded, but in other screen versions of early modern culture male bodies are central, and are likewise rendered vulnerable. Although youthfully empowered and sexualized at first, the body of Henry VIII in *The Tudors* comes to be marked by disease and pain; around him, other male bodies are subject to maiming or violence. The ashen-faced, grey-smocked body of Thomas More at his execution in *Wolf Hall* (2015) is symptomatic of the ways in which the early modern period is often now figured as a milieu of violence and terror (Wray, 2011: 16-33). The male body functions bleakly to incarnate this conception of the early modern, further emphasised by tenebrous lighting, inky detailing, and an emphasis on the visceral and the quotidian. Media representations of the early modern period increasingly prioritize traumatic psychological perspectives as well as commemorating traumatically damaged bodies: in the television adaptation of *Henry V* (dir. Thea Sharrock, 2012), the protagonist and all of his men are haunted by traumatic recollections of the Agincourt battlefield. In such representations, the place of the Renaissance in cultural memory is reframed not as a 'golden age' but in terms of an anti-heritage landscape.

Public communities remembering the early modern in the present are stimulated in part by currents of popular culture, but also by temporal memory, in the form of a compulsion to remember past events and peoples via date triggers. Anniversaries function as drivers of cultural engagement and rationales for the programming of civic activity, often underpinned by forms of partnership working that are incited by current funding regimes in the public and voluntary sectors. Academic research in the UK contributes to such partnerships, partly as a result of the pressures of a REF-driven impact agenda that pushes universities and public bodies into closer allegiances. At the time of writing, a striking example is the exhibition and events programme hosted by the University of London in collaboration with the Council of

Lutheran Churches, 'Reformation: Shattered World, New Beginnings'. Marking the quincentenary of Martin Luther's posting of his 95 theses on a Wittenberg church door, this programme brings a London-specific focus to bear on a set of essentially transnational concerns which, as we argue above, are critically located at the interface of memory studies and early modern studies, namely, to cite the programme's web publicity, 'the impact of the Reformation on culture and society; the way its communications industry drove change; and the consequences of the emergence of a new world order'. Memory work here affirms London as a global city at a moment when Brexit places pressure on values of diversity. The ruptures consequent on the Reformation may be represented very differently in other places: a recent exhibition at the Museum of Orange Heritage in Belfast, Northern Ireland played down religious struggle, accenting instead personal stories that instance mutual understanding. In a region where 'endemic division' has actively sustained 'sites of memory as sites of conflict', such a focus marks a highly significant shift towards 'commemoration as healing ... a remembering that enables forgetting' (Longley, 2001: 223-4). When historically significant anniversaries act as stimuli for communities to engage in collective remembering and emotional experiences, it brings into the public arena a temporal memory-making with radical potential for asking questions about collective memory, regional and national identity, meaning and inheritance. An instance of this potential, dependent on social media rather than institutions but deeply informed by academic research, is the London Rebel History Calendar, which opens up multiple opportunities for commemoration of the radical past over the *longue durée*.

The impetus to mark anniversaries by making new interventions in the production of cultural memory is also found in contemporary performance. In 2013, the Lazarus Theatre Company staged Elizabeth Cary's play, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, in her birth town of Burford, Oxfordshire, marking the anniversary of its 1613 publication, and making a point about the location of early modern women writers and the creative networks in which they participated beyond London and the court (Wray, 2015: 149-151). This site-specific staging event is related to the current prominence of reconstructed playing spaces, which are more often associated with Shakespeare than with women playwrights and consequently raise questions about nostalgia and cultural authority. Following the discovery of a Shakespearean-style playhouse in Gdańsk, Poland, in the early 1990s, and informed by historical research into travelling English players, a 'Shakespeare Theatre' incorporating the design of earlier structures was erected in 2014, its purpose, in part, to stimulate cultural memory in a city that

historically has been a ‘great international... meeting-point’ and to revive traditions of visiting theatrical companies (Jackson, 2009: 93). By building a theatre on or near the foundations of an earlier structure, organizations like Gdańsk’s ‘Shakespeare Theatre’ or ‘Shakespeare’s Globe’ seek to involve users in the mission of recovery through codes of response or re-enactment behaviours, thereby embedding the mnemonic work reconstructed playing spaces perform in communities as well as buildings (Silverstone, 2005: 34). Both the Gdańsk ‘Shakespeare Theatre’ and ‘Shakespeare’s Globe’ are home to theatre festivals, and these can serve as repositories of nostalgic interplay, locating affective power in the opportunity to establish a kind of contact with the anterior and the authentic. The particular conjunction of emotional registers involved in these festivals points up how they depend for their success on mapping contemporary interpretative communities onto imagined past communities. Here, however, the potentially reactionary fantasy of enacting ‘continuity with a calmer, more ordered world’ (Kennedy, 2009: 78) is one that memory studies would critique. More positively, the theatrical and cultural practices associated with theatre reconstructions and festivals may be understood as part of the rise of practice as research, a development which can provide ‘an analytical tool and ... a provocation’ with which to cultivate ‘informed understandings of the past’ (Dustagheer, Jones and Rycroft, 2017: 173, 174). Ongoing work on and in reconstructed playing spaces, for example, has generated a surer appreciation of the affective and emotional energies which vectors of memory incite in performers and audiences. It also makes possible more sophisticated discussions of location and space, and demonstrates how excitingly historical artefacts can be reanimated for temporally and spatially dispersed readers and interpreters, brought together thanks to technologies of memory that offer new ways of activating the early modern.

Kerwin Lee Klein astutely located the fascination of memory as a conceptual category in the liminal intellectual space that emerged when, in the closing decades of the twentieth century, ‘historians began borrowing from semiotics and scholars in traditionally formalist fields ... began venturing into historicism’ (2000: 128). This is indeed the space occupied by the contributions to this special issue, which demonstrates that, over the nearly two decades since Klein took stock of the state of memory studies, memory has continued to function fruitfully for scholars of early modern culture as an interstitial concept which casts connecting threads across the gaps between institutions and personal experience, between subjectivity and history. In many ways, the essays gathered here can be seen as manifestations of the approach to the study of the social and cultural dimensions of memory called for by Wolf Kansteiner in

that they track ‘complex process[es] of cultural production and consumption’ in which ‘the ingenuity of memory makers and the subversive intents of memory consumers’ are held in play (2002: 179). Initiatives in researching memory, coupled with cognate developments in museum, community and cultural programming, are, as never before, enabling connections between disciplines and approaches, paving the way for multiple meeting-points in memory studies and opening additional prospects for sustained and productive interchange. We hope this special issue may be a contribution to such encounters.

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